Mediterranean, Dinaric and other elements have been interbreeding for many centuries. To disentangle the racial strains of such a population is a task that cannot be solved without much preliminary research.

T.

Lange, Prof. Dr. Max. *Erbbiologie der angeborenen Körperfehler.* Mit einem Vorwort von Prof. Dr. E. Rüdin. Stuttgart, 1935. Ferdinand Enke Verlag. Pp. 143. Price RM. 11.20.

LANGE'S book on the congenital malformations of the human body shows clearly the difficulties in the practical application of the German law concerning the prevention of hereditarily defective offspring.

The author's attitude to the application of the law is this: "The main stress in judging whether in the case of a congenital defect the law concerning sterilization is to be applied or not shall be laid on the likelihood of inheritance, although to some extent the curability of that disease may be taken into account."

Among the anomalies recommended for sterilization are (1) those cases of congenital club-feet, in which either the same anomaly has occurred in other members of the family or it is associated with other anomalies known to be caused "endogenously"; (2) all cases of club-hands, although the author admits that the genetical evidence is at least very doubtful; (3) certain cases of "neurotic" club-feet; (4) some cases of defects of the long limb bones, particularly of the fibula; (5) all cases of phokomelia, of split hands or feet; (6) severe cases of multiple exostoses; (7) all cases of *osteogenesis imperfecta* (i.e. osteopsathyrosis; abnormal fragility of the bones); and (8) all cases of *dysostosis cleidocranialis* (lack of clavicle, defects in flat skull bones).

Persons with a congenital dislocation of the hip should, according to Lange, be sterilized unless it can be proved that no cases of this or of certain other anomalies of the hip, which he regards as abortive cases, have occurred in the last three generations of the direct ancestors, among the brothers and sisters of the parents, or amongst the proband's own brothers and sisters. This regulation, however, is liable to exceptions. The majority of cases in Bavaria come from the border of Czechoslovakia where a high density of population seems desirable. Here sterilization might noticeably decrease the general birth-rate. This Lange regards as a disadvantage greater than the chance of influencing the incidence of dislocations of the hip at the place of its greatest frequency.

In the case of the congenital spastic paralysis known as Little's disease, there is no evidence for hereditary causes, the anomaly being caused by a brain lesion in child-birth. Often, mental deficiency accompanies the other nervous symptoms. In such cases, Lange recommends sterilization, for, although the anomaly itself is non-genetic, that lesion of the brain might have had a secondary blastophthoric influence!

This list is by no means complete. From the point of view of genetics, the book is open to further criticism. Gaps in knowledge are boldly bridged by speculations, while the real difficulties and problems of purifying a population from irregularly dominant or recessive genes have been underestimated or neglected.

H. G. HILL.

Muckermann, Hermann. *Eugenik.* Berlin, 1934. Dümmler. Pp. 159. RM. 5.85.

THIS is a serious and unsensational plea for eugenics addressed to the lay reader. It starts with a historical introduction, stressing, quite rightly, the debt which the movement owes to the work and enthusiasm of Galton and at the same time pointing out how much eugenics is coloured to-day by the work of Malthus, Darwin and Mendel, who, unlike Galton, were not themselves propagandists. This introduction is perhaps the best part of the work—the historical perspective is fair and the many photographs with which it is illustrated are excellent.

On the other hand, the presentation of the case for eugenics is uncritical and blurred by the intrusion of much that is irrelevant. For